RACHAEL:

OR,

The Little Mourner.

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RACHAEL,

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THE LITTLE MOURNER.

A TALE OF TRUTH.

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CHILDREN who tender mothers have,
Scarce know what they possess;
And seldom think how much their love,
Their childhood e'er will bless.
Nor do they know how dark their lot
Would be if orphans left;
Or share the bitterness they'd feel,
If once of them bereft.

Now little Rachael's mother died,
When she was but a child,
Scarce four years old; but Rachael mourned,
And seldom after smiled.
And on her infant heart there seemed,
A new impression made;
For she was sad and silent oft,
Nor e'er with children played.

She would not lisp her mother's name,
For many a tedious week;
Or, of her tender love and care,
E'en to her father speak.
One evening as she sat beside,
Her mother's vacant chair;
Gazing upon the glowing coals,
With earnest thoughtful stare;

Her father said, "My little girl,
What are your thoughts about?
Say, are you dreaming of the sport,
Of playmates' merry shout;
Or of the pink-eyed violets,
You gathered in the lawn?
Or of the pleasant carrolling,
Of birds at break of dawn?"

"Oh! no; my father," said the child,
Breathing a heavy sigh,
"I'm wondering whether it can be,
Bad thing indeed to *die*."
"Bad thing?" amazed the father said,
"Oh, surely not, oh, no;
For those who were the good on earth,
Are happier where they go."

"Well, mother true was very good,
Then it is good she died;
Is 't not, my father," eagerly
The orphan quick replied.
The father checked his rising grief,
For he was filled with woe;
And with affected firmness said,
"Yes, dear, 't is surely so.

For she is very happy now,
In that bright world of bliss;"—
"Then why, my father, do you grieve,
That she has gone from this?"
"I 'm glad, my love," with tears he said,
And here his utterance failed;
For deep affection clung to him,
And thus firm faith has quailed.

"But yet, my father, nurse told me,
That people all were sad,
And wept last sabbath when you preached,
And that *you* seemed not glad.
And that your text was, 'I 'm the man,
Who hath affliction seen,'—
And that you spoke of mother too,—
Affliction's grief I ween."

The father leaned upon his hand,
For struggles were within,
With what he deemed his duty here,
That he the crown might win.
And gladly would he make the child,
The lesson comprehend,
Why he rejoiced, and why he grieved,
But words were vain to spend.

And thus he sat all silently
While tears bathed either cheek;
For to the queries of his child,
He no reply could speak.
"I 'm glad my mother's happy too,"—
Hearing no answer given;—
"Ah, glad as you," the orphan said,
"Yes, glad that she 's in heaven."

"But still I heard them say I 'm sure,
That when dear mother died,
You fainted, father," and she drew,
Still closer to his side.
"Oh, do not, do not, precious child,"—
The wretched father screamed,
And on the chair back leaned his head,
And groaned, then sleeping seemed.

And little Rachael feared to stir,
Lest she should waken him;
And thus she waited patient long,—
The waxen lights grew dim;
The fire was black and sunken down,
And the dark room was chill;
But yet her father seemed to sleep,
And Rachael waited still.

And still she feared, unconscious child,
To break his slumber deep;—
Alas! 't was dreamless, and no sound
Could rouse him from that sleep!
And when the nurse came there he sat,
All motionless and cold!
While Rachael like a lamb was left,
A wanderer from the fold.

Next day the orphan was removed,
And given to the care,
Of a kind aunt whom much she loved,
Her wealth and home to share.
And every means she tried to win,
The mourner from her grief;
And pretty toys she gave her oft,
But nothing brought relief.

One evening Rachael sat beside
Her foster parent there;
Her picture books and doll no more
Engaged her infant care;
And she seemed thoughtful, far beyond
So young and pure a heart;
And often sighed strange sighs indeed,
As anxious to depart.

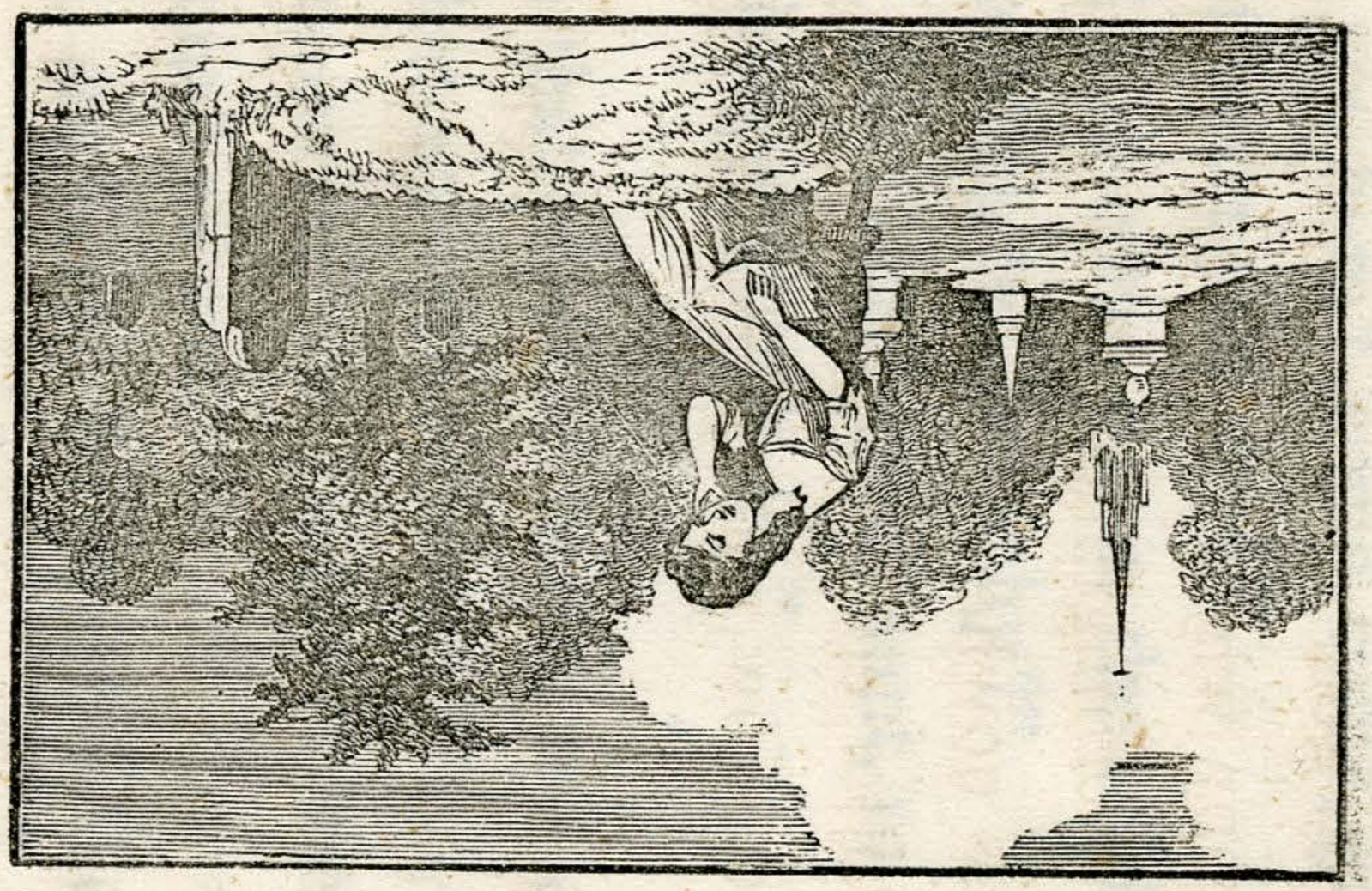
At length her aunt said, "Is there aught,
That I can puchase you,
To cheer your heart, or any thing,
That you would like to do?"

"I do not wish for pretty toys,"
She quickly did reply;
"No books I want, but I should like,
As mother did, to die."

"Why do you wish to die, my dear,"
Again she asked the child;
"Because I should be happy then,"
She said, and mournful smiled.
"And are you not quite happy now?"
"Ah, no," she sad replied;
"Why think you then that you shall be,
When you shall once have died?"

"Because I have been rather good,
And father always said,
That all good people ever were,
Happy when they were dead."
Next morning and the little girl,
Was nowhere to be found,
And bitter cold the morning was,
And snow was on the ground.

Servants in all directions went,
While the kind aunt beside,
In the still quiet churchyard sought
Her charge—and there descried,
Stretched on a small and snowy grave,
The object of her fear,
With a few coils of twine held fast,
And on her cheek, a tear.



She roused her with bewildered gaze,
When the kind lady said,
"Why are you here? come, come, go home,
And rest upon your bed."
"Why did you come out in the cold,
Dear Rachael, tell me why?"
"I wished this churchyard, aunt, to see,
Where happy people lie."

"But with that piece of twine, my love,
Pray what was your design?"
"Why, measuring the graves to see,
If any small as mine
Would be, are here; for much I feared,
That none but people grown,
Were e'er allowed on earth to die,—
But here, aunt, here is one.

'T is just as long as I am, look,"
With a calm smile said she;
"So little children die, indeed,
Soon I shall happy be;
With father, and my mother dear,—
Oh, now I am so glad;
For I am weary staying here,
And lonely too, and sad."

They took the Little Mourner home,
And wrapped her close and warm,
And gave her kindly nourishment
That life again might charm.
But nothing soothed or gave her joy;
She weak and feeble grew,
Pining, as summer's gentle buds,
For heaven's refreshing dew.

Three days passed on while seraph forms,
  Were hovering round her bed,
Invisible to earthly sight,
  With glorious pinions spread;
But Rachael saw them, for she talked,
  Of God and angels too;
And lifted oft her tiny hands,
  To point them out to view.

And of that blessed land she spoke,
  Where all good children go;
And of her parents waiting there
  For her, its charms to show.
But when the fourth morn brightly came,
  She raised her drooping head,
And in an ecstasy of soul,
  Adieus to all she said.

Her snowy hands upon her breast,
She meekly folded o'er,
"My mother dear,"—she gently spoke,
And Rachael was no more.
To that bright world for which she longed
And early was prepared;
Her wearied spirit joyful fled
And all its glories shared.

And down the frozen turf beneath,
Upon her mother's breast,
The Little Mourner thus they laid,
To a sweet peaceful rest.
Yet blessed are they thus who mourn
Of childhood's gentle throng;
For they to Jesus' flock above,
Right early shall belong.